

Healthy Homes, Healthy Families

A GUIDE TO PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH
BY MAKING YOUR HOME A SAFER ENVIRONMENT



Monroe County 2020 Edition

THIS BOOKLET INCLUDES PRACTICAL TIPS FOR REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS IN YOUR HOME AND REGIONAL INFORMATION FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT OFFER RESOURCES TO IMPROVE HEALTH.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication was brought to you by the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and the Rochester Healthy Homes Partnership.

Many agencies in Monroe County offer services and information related to improving home environmental health. These agencies are linked through the Rochester Healthy Homes Partnership. Partnership members who assisted in the development of this book include: City of Rochester, Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning, Finger Lakes Occupational Health Services, Monroe County Department of Public Health, New York State Pollution Prevention Institute, Rochester Energy Efficiency and Weatherization (RENEW) Climate Fund, and the University of Rochester Environmental Health Sciences Center.

Funding for this printing provided by the Monroe County Department of Public Health and the University of Rochester Environmental Health Services Center. The September 2020 revision of the Healthy Homes Guide was edited and printed by the Finger Lakes Children's Environmental Health Center with funding from the New York State Children's Environmental Health Center of Excellence. Grants Gateway ID: DOH01-CEHCE1-2017.



Healthy Homes, Healthy Families

WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HAZARD?

Environmental health hazards include physical hazards or toxins that may enter our bodies through air, food or water. Some environmental health hazards can make you sick right away; others show no signs for many years, so it is important to understand and avoid them now.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Environmental hazards usually have the biggest impact on children because it affects their developing bodies while in the womb and after birth, not to mention that their hand-to-mouth behavior, size and activities, such as crawling, subject them to additional hazards. Early life exposures to environmental contaminants can lead to many health problems later in life, including neurological problems, obesity, heart disease and cancer.

Environmental hazards can also be passed from a mother's body to her unborn baby or to the baby through breast milk. This means women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should also avoid exposure to environmental hazards.

WHY FOCUS ON HOMES?

Americans, especially children, spend most of their time at home. Environmental health hazards are often found in homes, such as lead in paint, radon gas, mold, and asbestos. These hazards can cause serious health problems, especially for children. By focusing on homes, we can reduce the risk of environmental health hazards and protect the health of all Americans.

Asthma accounts
for more than
14 million missed
school days
every year.



Asthma Resources

Asthma Basics is a free 50-minute online course that helps people learn about asthma. This course is for anyone with asthma—parents, caregivers, friends and family. It is ideal for school/childcare provider staff and the community at all levels. Participants learn about asthma, how to identify and manage asthma symptoms, how to understand the value of an Asthma Action Plan and how to respond to a breathing emergency. To learn more, visit www.Lung.org/asthmabasics.

American Lung Association of the Northeast (Smoking & Health Action Coalition of Monroe County)
(585) 666-1395
www.smokefreemonroe.com

Lungtropolis® is a free, fun-filled website for kids ages 5 to 10 with asthma and a great source of advice for parents. When kids visit Lungtropolis, they become asthma control agents and conquer the mucus mob. While playing they learn how to control their asthma.

The website guides parents through steps to help recognize and manage their child's asthma symptoms. Interactive quizzes and questions make it easy to learn how to keep their child healthy and active. To learn more, visit www.lungtropolis.com.

Monroe County Department of Public Health—Indoor Air Quality provides in-home environmental assessments of potential causes of poor indoor air quality such as furnace combustion, radon and carbon monoxide.

(585) 753-5075
www.monroecounty.gov/eh-indoorairquality.php

NYS Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program of Cornell University provides information on Integrated Pest Management. See "Household Chemicals," page 18.

New York State Smoker's Quitline has trained specialists to support you and your quit plans. www.quit.ny.gov

General Home Hazards

There are a variety of general home hazards that can cause unintentional injuries such as poisoning, falling and choking.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Set your water temperature at or below 120°F.

Reduce clutter and make repairs to prevent falls.

Keep chemicals (cleaners, medicine, etc.) away from children.

Store them:

- Away from food
- High up
- Behind childproof locks

SAFE DRIVING

Always wear seatbelts in the car. Secure children in an age-appropriate car seat until their 8th birthday in accordance with New York State law.

HELMET SAFETY

New York State law requires helmets when riding bikes, skateboarding, riding on a scooter, rollerblading and skating up until the age of 14. Teens and adults should also wear helmets to prevent serious injury.

SAFE SLEEP

Always sleep babies on their back in an empty crib without blankets, bumpers or toys; items in the crib can cause your baby to suffocate.

A baby that sleeps or naps with a parent or sibling can be crushed or suffocated. Even five minutes in an unsafe sleep environment can cause death. Your baby is safest without a blanket and sleeping on their back. For warmth, dress your baby in sleep clothing such as a one-piece sleeper.



Home accidents kill one person every 16 minutes in the U.S.

—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

General Home Resources

Get a Free Energy Audit

Did you know there are grant programs and low-interest loans for homeowners and landlords to make their properties healthier, safer and more energy efficient? You may qualify for grants or loans to increase energy efficiency, improve safety, install bathroom and kitchen fans, replace older appliances, clean or replace furnaces and hot water heaters, resolve lead paint problems, replace windows and doors, make emergency repairs, etc.

Call the Action for a Better Community Energy Conservation Program at (585) 442-4160, NeighborWorks Community Partners Home Energy Services at (585) 325-4170, or PathStone Corporation Home Rehabilitation and Energy Services programs at (585) 546-3700, ext. 3025 to schedule a FREE energy audit and learn more about possible programs and grants. They can help you save money on your heating and cooling bills and make your home a healthier place to live, work and play.

The Home-Safe-Home program at LIFESPAN provides a general home safety review for senior citizens that is geared toward preventing slips, trips, and falls. The "Safety and Security for Seniors" program can make minor home modifications, including installation of grab bars, smoke detectors, hand rails for stairs, door grips, handicapped toilet seats, tub transfer benches and bathtub seats. Homeowners may qualify for free services and/or hire LIFESPAN to make modifications paying cost of supplies and a nominal service fee.

900 Clinton Ave South, Rochester, NY 14618, (585) 244-8400 x151, www.lifespan-roch.org

The Injury Free Coalition for Kids of Rochester is an injury prevention program whose mission is to work with a community coalition to learn more about how, when and where injuries to children occur, set priorities for injury prevention,

Household cleaners are the number one cause of poisoning of children.

—EPA



Household Chemicals, Pesticides and Poisons

Many cleaning products, pesticides, medicines and other household chemicals are toxic and could be harmful to you and your children. Children are at the highest risk.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

PRACTICE SAFE STORAGE:

- Store medicine and household chemicals, like cleaning products, bleach, pesticides, automotive products and paint, out of the reach of children.
- Use a locked cabinet whenever possible.
- Never leave household chemicals out or unattended.
- Store all products in their original container.
- Store chemicals separate from food products. Many chemical containers look like common food containers.

PRACTICE SAFE USE:

- Read labels on household chemicals very carefully and follow directions.
- Keep the room well-ventilated and have good air flow while you are cleaning.
- Never mix different household chemicals.
- Avoid long-term storage of unused chemicals. Safely dispose of old or leftover chemicals.
- Consider using safer alternatives. Vinegar, baking soda and borax are excellent non-toxic cleaners.
- Use integrated pest management (IPM, see page 18) to deal with pests. If IPM doesn't work and you decide to use chemicals, call a professional.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

ASBESTOS

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber that was used in building insulation, floor and ceiling tiles and other materials until it was banned in 1989. When the material is broken or crumbling, fibers can be breathed in through the air. Long-term exposure to these fibers can cause asbestosis, lung cancer or mesothelioma.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, toxic gas. It comes from burning fuels (gas, oil, etc.). CO can kill you or make you ill before you are even aware it is present. Only a CO detector can detect it.

FURNACE

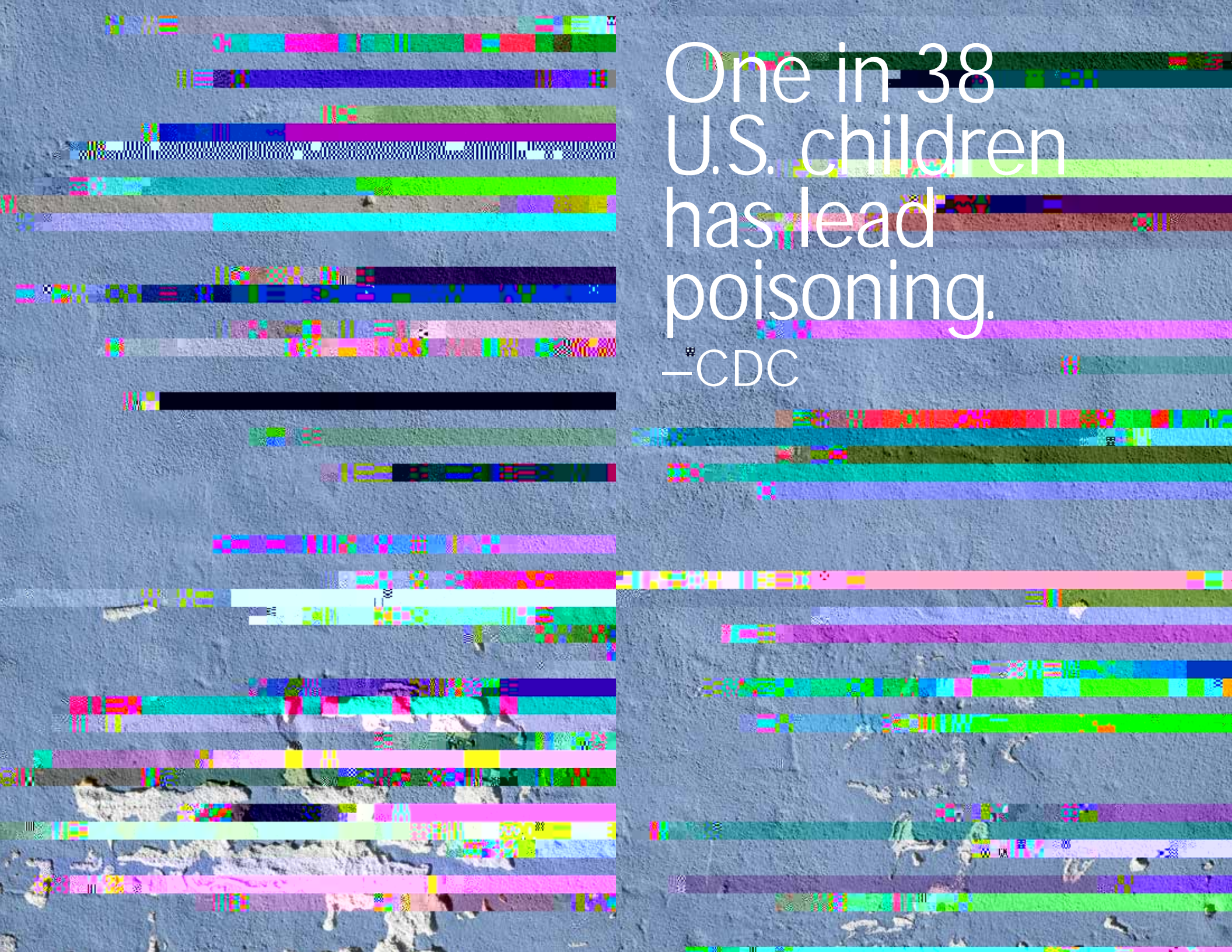
If you have a hot air furnace, it greatly impacts your home's air quality.

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One in 38
U.S. children
has lead
poisoning.

—CDC

Lead Hazards

LEAD POISONING

Lead is a toxin that affects the brain, heart, bones and kidneys. Because of children's growing brains and bodies, lead poisoning has a greater impact on children than adults. Even small amounts of lead in children's bodies can cause permanent learning and behavioral problems, often with no physical symptoms. This includes a lower IQ, hyperactivity and delinquent behavior.

LEAD HAZARDS IN THE HOME

Lead poisoning occurs when harmful amounts of lead are swallowed or breathed in. Homes built before 1978 are at risk for containing hazardous leaded dust and paint. Lead can also be found in soil, jewelry, toys, home remedies, ceramics, candy or water.

LEAD IN ROCHESTER

Lead paint in homes was banned in the United States in 1978. Paint in homes built before then may contain lead. Most of the homes in the city of Rochester were built before 1978, which puts them at risk for lead hazards.

In 2005, the city of Rochester passed an ordinance that adds a lead hazard assessment to city inspections of rental properties.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

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City of Rochester Lead Hazard Control Grant Program provides financial assistance up to \$14,000 for eligible property owners to address lead hazards as well as \$1,400 for "Healthy Home" interventions in the city of Rochester. Go to www.cityofrochester.gov/HomeRepairGrants/ to learn more about this program or call (585) 428-6520.

City of Rochester Lead Ordinance requires that all pre-1978 rental homes be assessed for lead hazards. FREE lead inspections are available by request for anyone residing in the city of Rochester. Property owners are required by federal law to address lead hazards using EPA Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) Rule. The City of Rochester provides lead hazard information and resources to help property owners understand and comply with the RRP Rule. For more information, visit www.cityofrochester.gov/leadhazard/.

SUMMER MEALS



Legal/Financial Information

Renters, property owners and owner-occupants may face issues such as the withholding of rent and code enforcement. Others may have difficulty obtaining grants/loans or accessing resources to make homes healthier. There are several legal and financial organizations in Rochester that can offer assistance and information to help with these issues.

RESOURCES

City of Rochester Neighborhood Service Centers (NSC) provide support for tenants and owner-occupants for quality-of-life issues like heating problems, unsanitary conditions, etc. Residents may also contact their NSC for free lead inspections of pre-1978 homes in the city of Rochester.

Northwest Quadrant NSC (585) 428-7620

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Thank you

Causewave Community Partners

Common Ground Health

Finger Lakes Children's Environmental Health Center

Monroe County Department of Public Health

Rochester Area Community Foundation

RENEW (Rochester ENergy E fficiency and Weatherization)

Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning

www.theleadcoalition.org

Rochester Healthy Homes Partnership

www.ehsc.urmc.edu/healthyhomes
